

Celebrating the Cape's culture

August 02, 2009

This afternoon, for the 24th year in a row, the Boston Pops will take the stage on the Hyannis Village Green and entertain a crowd of thousands with some of the best renditions of popular classical music you will ever hear.

Indeed, anyone who has attended a performance of the Boston Symphony Orchestra or the Boston Pops knows how blessed we are to have these world-class musicians performing within driving distance of our patch of sand here on Cape Cod. The BSO's winter home is Symphony Hall in Boston and summer residence is Tanglewood in the Berkshires, two easy and inspiring places to take in a concert.

And for one summer evening, those talented musicians assemble on the lawn before an appreciative crowd of 15,000, the Cape's single largest audience. The beauty of the Cape meets the grandeur of classical performance at the TD Banknorth Pops by the Sea, and perhaps there is no greater experience than to hear the sound of a concertmaster violin drifting into the salty summer air as the sun slowly descends over the treetops.

Keith Lockhart is a consummate showman, leading the Pops with flair and making selections that appeal to a crowd that may be lost with Brahms but still love a good Gershwin. He follows a tradition of impressive conductors, including the beloved Arthur Fiedler and the Academy Award-winning John Williams. There's more star power from the "guest conductors," movie and television stars who set the light-hearted mood with their campy efforts to wave the baton and entertain the crowd. Last year Henry Winkler proved exceedingly popular and this year Angie Dickinson will join Lockhart on stage.

Then, there is the scene. With the green dressed in white, from the big-top to the table tops to the folding chairs, there is an informal elegance to the evening, inspiring and assuming at the same time. Very Cape Cod.

Of course, the Boston Pops are at the heart of the day. Their talents and international reputation aside, the Pops musicians so clearly enjoy the moment and we in turn enjoy what they are creating. It is a perfect symbiotic relationship between performers and audience.

So we pause for a moment and give thanks to the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod for bringing the Boston Pops to the Cape this year and every year. It is an event we eagerly await and one that cultivates a deep appreciation for the arts for so many people here.

Certainly the Pops concert is the signature event for the Arts Foundation, but they are tirelessly at work on behalf of artistry in all forms throughout the year. Maggie Van Sciver and her staff have no shortage of performances and openings, celebrations and festivals, that the Arts Foundation is either sponsoring, hosting, advocating or creating. And it is thanks to their efforts that the Cape is rich with a vibrant artist community.

That much will be apparent this afternoon, as the Pops tune their strings and the masses gather on beach chairs and blankets to soak in the sound and atmosphere. We welcome the experience as we do every year, and we hope that support for the arts in all forms continues tomorrow and the next day and the next.

One of humankind's greatest gifts is the ability to create works of beauty and to appreciate arts and artists. And the Cape is rich with it all. Let's take a moment and marvel at our good fortune.

Welcome, Boston Pops, to another wonderful day. And thank you, Arts Foundation, for making it happen once again.

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